

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7002

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SEOUL 7686

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, KS

SUBJECT: POLICE BLOCK NDP MARCH

REF: SEOUL 7634

SUMMARY: NDP ATTEMPT TO MARCH FROM NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BUILDING TO PARTY HEADQUARTERS BLOCKED BY POLICE. KIM YONG-SAM TAKEN HOME BY POLICE AFTER WHICH HE PROMISED NO EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY ACTIVITIES DURING FORD VISIT. GOVERNMENT HAS BEGUN BUDGET DEBATE WHILE NDP STAGING "SIT-IN" AT ASSEMBLY. END SUMMARY.

1. OPPOSITION ATTEMPTED NOV 15 TO DRAMATIZE EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY CAMPAIGN FOR CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION BY MARCH FROM NATIONAL ASSEMBLY TO PARTY HEADQUARTERS. WHEN NDP ASSEMBLYMEN ATTEMPTED TO LEAVE ASSEMBLY FOLLOWING PARTY CAUCUS GROUP OF ABOUT 100 DRP AND YUCHONGHOE ASSEMBLYMEN BLOCKED THEIR EXIT FROM BUILDING. NDP GROUP LED BY KIM YONG-SAM BROKE THROUGH LINES OF GOVT ASSEMBLYMEN BUT WAS HALTED BY ESTIMATED 250 POLICE IN RIOT GEAR. (700-800 POLICE IN GENERAL AREA).

2. POLICE ALLOWED KIM AND FRONT NDP RANK THROUGH LINES THEN FORCED THEM INTO WAITING CARS. KIM RESISTED,
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BUT HE AND 11 OTHER ASSEMBLYMEN WERE TAKEN TO THEIR HOMES.

POLICE DID NOT STRIKE ASSEMBLYMEN, ALTHOUGH KIM ATTEMPTED TO PUNCH RIOT POLICE, WITH LITTLE EFFECT AGAINST HELMETS AND FACE MASKS.

3. SCENE OUTSIDE ASSEMBLY DEGENERATED INTO GENERAL BRAWL BETWEEN PHOTOGRAPHERS AND PLAIN CLOTHES POLICE WHO TRIED TO PREVENT THEM FROM PHOTOGRAPHING ACTION. ONE POLICE OFFICIAL HIT ON HEAD BY CAMERA TOOK REFUGE IN POLICE LINES. TRAFFIC WAS BLOCKED FOR SEVERAL HOURS ON SEOUL'S MAIN STREET.

4. KIM YONG-SAM RETURNED TO ASSEMBLY EARLY AFTERNOON. HE TOLD REPORTERS THAT, IN ORDER TO MAKE CLEAR NDP EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY ACTIVITY NOT CONNECTED WITH VISIT PRESIDENT FORD, NDP WOULD NOT CONDUCT PROTEST ACTIVITIES NOV 20-24. BY LATE AFTERNOON NDP ASSEMBLYMEN STILL CLOSETED IN OPPOSITION ASSEMBLY CHAMBERS IN WHAT MEDIA TERMS A "SIT-IN". DRP-YUCHONGHOE IN MEANTIME HAVE STARTED UNILATERAL DEBATE ON 1975 BUDGET WITH POLICE REMAINING OUTSIDE ASSEMBLY BUILDING.

5. COMMENT: FIRM ACTION IN PREVENTING NDP FROM TAKING TO STREETS EVIDENCE OF GOVT RESOLVE TO NIP IN BUD ANY ACTIONS WHICH COULD ACT AS CATALYST FOR LARGER DEMONSTRATIONS INVOLVING OTHER DISSIDENT GROUPS. KIM YONG-SAM HAS BEEN TOLD HOW FAR HE CAN GO, AND FOR TIME BEING IN DEFERENCE TO PRESIDENT FORD'S VISIT HE HAS AGREED TO PLAY BALL.
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